

18. Paul and the Law Debate

1. Overview of the Topic

The question of whether the Apostle Paul abolished the Law has been a historical and theological controversy.

Some argue that Paul nullified the Law completely and advocate for a position known as "abolitionism."

However, Paul's treatment of the Law, especially in Romans and Galatians, reveals a more nuanced and balanced understanding.

2. Key Questions

- 1) Did Paul teach the abolition of the Law?
 - 2) What does "freedom from the Law" mean in Paul's writings?
 - 3) How does the Law relate to salvation?
 - 4) How should Christians understand and apply the Law today?
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3. Main Views in the Debate

1) Law Abolitionism

- (1) Claim: The Law was completely abolished through Christ's death on the cross.
- (2) Key Verse: Ephesians 2:15 – "...by abolishing in His flesh the law with its commandments and regulations..."

2) Law Continuationism

- (1) Claim: The Law still stands as a moral guide for believers.
- (2) Key Verse: Romans 3:31 – "Do we then nullify the Law by this faith? Not at all! Rather, we uphold the Law."

3) Law Fulfillment View

- (1) Claim: The Law has been fulfilled in Christ and is now lived out through the Spirit.
 - (2) Key Verses: Matthew 5:17; Galatians 5:14; Romans 8:3–4
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4. Paul's View Summarized

Category	Explanation	Reference
Function of the Law	Reveals sin, leads to Christ	Rom 3:20; Gal 3:24
Limitation of the Law	Cannot give life, not the basis for salvation	Gal 3:21
Christ's Role	End/goal of the Law, Mediator of the New Covenant	Rom 10:4
Work of the Spirit	Writes the Law on believers' hearts and empowers obedience	Rom 8:2-4

5. Conclusion

Paul did not regard the Law as abolished, but rather as fulfilled in Christ.

Believers are set free from the condemnation of the Law, not to live in sin, but to live by the Spirit—fulfilling the Law through love and grace.

6. Application

- 1) Avoid both legalism (law-based righteousness) and antinomianism (lawlessness).
- 2) Live in the freedom of the Spirit while honoring God's holy will.
- 3) Understand and apply the Law through the lens of the Gospel.